

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8772
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
CINCPAC

UNCLAS NEW DELHI 0860

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PBOR MPOS VM CB IN
SUBJECT: SRV AMBASSADOR'S PRESS COMMENTS ON CAMBODIAN CONFLICT
AND DR. BRZEZINSKI'S REMARKS

SUMMARY: AT A PRESS CONFERENCE IN NEW DELHI JANUARY 16,
VIETNAM'S AMBASSADOR NGUYEN VAN SINH PRAISED THE GOI
FOR ITS "PRECIOUS CONTRIBUTION" OF FAVORING A PEACEFUL
SOLUTION TO THE VIETNAMESE-CAMBODIAN CONFLICT AND
COMMENTED THAT DR. BRZEZINSKI'S REFERENCE TO A PROXY
WAR HAD HURT THE FEELINGS OF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE AND
WAS INDICATIVE OF CONTINUED AMERICAN MISUNDERSTANDING
OF THE VIETNAMESE. BRANDING CAMBODIA THE AGGRESSOR,
SINH SAID THAT VIETNAM STOOD READY TO NEGOTIATE A
PEACEFUL SOLUTION ANY TIME AND AT ANY LEVEL. END SUMMARY.

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1. THE VIETNAMESE AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED HIS "SINCERE
GRATITUDE" TO THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF INDIA FOR
THEIR "PRECIOUS CONTRIBUTION" TO A PEACEFUL SOLUTION OF
THE VIETNAMESE-CAMBODIAN CONFLICT. EXPLAINING THE
"CONTRIBUTION", HE SAID THAT DURING HIS CALL ON THE
FOREIGN MINISTER, VAJPAYEE HAD SAID THAT INDIA WANTED
THE ISSUE TO BE SETTLED THROUGH PEACEFUL NEGOTIATIONS.

THIS, HE SAID, WAS WHAT VIETNAM ALSO WANTED AND THE SRV WAS PREPARED TO DISCUSS THE BORDER DISPUTE AT ANY TIME AND "AT WHATEVER LEVEL". "IF KAMPUCHEA CONTINUES TO REFUSE TO NEGOTIATION," HE REPORTEDLY ADDED, "IT WILL BEAR THE FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONSEQUENCES."

2. ASKED ABOUT DR. BRZEZINSKI'S REFERENCE TO A PROXY WAR, SINH SAID THAT THE REMARK HAD "HURT THE FEELINGS OF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE, WHO HAVE ALREADY SUFFERED A GREAT DEAL IN THEIR WAR OF INDEPENDENCE." HE REPORTEDLY ADDED, "THE US SUFFERED DEFEAT IN VIETNAM BECAUSE IT UNDERESTIMATED THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE. EVEN NOW IT IS NOT UNDERSTANDING THEM."

3. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, SINH ACCUSED "IMPERIALISTS AND REACTIONARIES" OF ENCOURAGING AND FAVORING THE CAMBODIAN ACTION. ASKED TO IDENTIFY THESE COUNTRIES, SINH REPORTEDLY SAID "THOSE WHO HAVE GREAT AMBITIONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA" ENCOURAGE THE CAMBODIANS AND ENGAGE IN DIVISIVE MANEUVERS. THE VIETNAMESE AMBASSADOR AVOIDED A QUESTION ABOUT WHETHER ANY THIRD COUNTRY WAS SENDING ARMS TO MILITARILY WEAK CAMBODIA AND SAID THAT HE WAS NOT AWARE OF VIETNAM'S HAVING TAKEN ANY FOREIGNERS AS PRISONERS IN THE FIGHTING.

4. ON THE FIGHTING, SINH SAID THAT THE DISPUTE WAS A COMPLEX LEGACY OF HISTORY AND THAT SINCE 1975 CAMBODIA UNCLASSIFIED

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HAD BEEN VIOLATING THE LAND BORDER AND ATTACKING VARIOUS ISLANDS, WITH GREAT LOSS OF LIFE AND PROPERTY TO VIETNAM. VIETNAM HAD ACTED IN SELF DEFENSE, HAD NO TERRITORIAL AMBITIONS AND WAS NOT IN OCCUPATION "OF ANY PIIECE OF CAMBODIAN TERRITORY." ASKED ABOUT A VIETNAMESE DESIRE FOR AN INDO-CHINA FEDERATION, SINH SAID THIS WAS A "BRAZEN" ALLEGATION DESIGNED BY THE CAMBODIANS TO COVER UP THEIR CRIMES AGAINST THE VIETNAMESE. HE REPORTEDLY ALSO SAID THAT IF THE TWO SIDES SIT DOWN TO DISCUSS THE PROBLEM "IN A SPIRIT OF BROTHERHOOD, EQUALITY AND REASON," IT COULD BE RESOLVED. HE ALSO ASKED THE PRESS NOT TO DO ANYTHING "WHICH COULD HURT THE MILITANT SOLIDARITY AND FRATERNAL FRIENDSHIP" BETWEEN VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA. GOHEEN

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